

February 16, 2022

Raised Bill No. 5033, AN ACT ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION]

Senator Slap, Representative Elliot, and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

My name is Michael Hernández, I am a student at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, from Stamford. I stand in support of Bill No. 5033.

There is documented food insecurity on our college campuses. At the University of Connecticut alone, a study showed that many students face food insecurity on and off-campus. A student-run program called Husky Market has met some of those needs over the past three semesters by delivering over \$1.5 million in aid in the form of \$300 gift cards to 1500 students across all campuses. However, it is not the responsibility of the student government to provide food security. It is the responsibility of all institutions of higher education.

I personally know friends who struggle each semester to access food because they do not have a meal plan or because they temporarily run out of food. There is little they can do. However, there is a lot the state legislature can do. That work starts with passing Bill No. 5033 so that all college students in Connecticut can have food security on and off-campus.

Bill No. 5033 addresses food security by keeping colleges accountable and by giving access to food during times of need. That time is now.

I hope the committee will vote favorably. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Hernández

Former Student Body President

Vice-President of Development and Operations, Connecticut Young Democrats

michael.g.2.hernandez@uconn.edu